

Press Release

For more information, contact Lisa Schmidt, at 406-278-0159, or Tom Daubert at 406-449-2095.

Imported Stallions Need Abortion-Virus Test

Stallions now need to be tested for *Equine Viral Arteritis* (EVA) before they come into Montana, says Acting State Veterinarian Jeanne Rankin.

“We’ve had several recent outbreaks of EVA and we want to protect Montana’s horse breeders,” Rankin says. “No stallions that test positive for EVA will be allowed into the state.”

EVA is a respiratory virus that also causes abortion in mares. The virus spreads through the air, infected semen and through the placenta to unborn foals. Often, stallions will not show symptoms of EVA, but still transmit it to vulnerable mares.

Horses can be, and often are, vaccinated against this disease.

“They should test negative before being vaccinated or else they might show up as false positives on screening tests,” Rankin says.

Montana’s new order requires imported stallions to test negative for EVA within 30 days before coming into the state. Or stallions can be vaccinated for at least 28 days before coming to Montana if they test negative for EVA within 10 days of the vaccination.

“EVA is a manageable disease and that’s what we’re trying to do with this new rule. We want to be sure that stallions coming into Montana don’t inadvertently bring EVA with them,” says Rankin.

The new rule holds one exemption: Stallions that are brought to Montana for exhibition only and then return to their home state are not required to be tested for EVA.

EVA tests are not the only requirement for traveling horses. All horses that are transported into or out of Montana also must have a brand inspection, a certificate of veterinary inspection (a health certificate) and a negative Equine Infectious Anemia test (a Coggins test) within 12 months.

Many breeders artificially inseminate mares and EVA can infect a mare through semen so the donor stallion must be tested before a breeder ships semen, too. The Department of Livestock also requires horse breeders to ship imported semen with a general health certificate and a negative Coggins test on the stallion, as well as the negative EVA test.

Rankin and the Montana Board of Livestock implemented the new testing requirement on August 20.

For more information on any of the regulations or semen, please contact the Montana Department of Livestock, State Veterinarian's Office at (406) 444-2043 or (406) 444-2976.